Negro, Colonization of - 1931.

NEWPORT, R. I.
NEWS

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NEGROES IN TURKEY

Disillusioned American Negroes are today digging ditches in Istanbul, trying to make a living. They are unable to do much more than grub along. They have no luxuries, small comfort, and have become accustomed to doing without what are considered necessaries of everyday life in the United States.

The United States looks pretty good to them nowadays. In spite of the undoubted race prejudice which makes living for the colored man under the Stars and Stripes sometimes uncomfortable.

The American Negroes who are now in Turkey left this country a few years ago under the leadership Mehmed Ali Bey, an American Negro who became a convert to the Moselm religion, and who persuaded several fellow converts to join him in an exodus to Turkey. "There is no race prejudice there," he told the Negroes. There isn't. But there isn't much of a chance for the American Negro to make anything like the living he could make for himself in America.

For some three hundred years America has been home to the descendants of the African slaves. They have become acclimated. They are really "American," in fact they are more American than are some white people who live here and who have small affection for the black race.

In spite of some drawbacks, of some rankling injustices to which the black American is exposed, by and large his lot is pretty good in this country, and it is improving; that is the important thing. The American Negro is a natural philosopher, with a happy disposition, in spite of his troubles. "I have read a great deal of pathetic stuff about the poor downtrodden black race," "says J. B. Priestly, English author, "but what struck me in America was the startling fact that it was the black man, on the whole, who was happy in America, and not the white."

The ability of the Negro to rise superior to his circumstances is a never-ending source of wonderment. Throughout the horror of slavery the thing that enabled the black to endure was his ability to be joyous and happy in the midst of persecution, brutality and brutishness. He sang and plucked his banjo strings and evolved a music of almost etheral beauty—amid squalor and ignorance.

The Negro has made magnificent progress since he ceased to be a chattel and became a man, in the eyes of the law, in 1863. The plight of the American Negroes in far-off Turkey is sad, but they will survive. And the Negroes who are here in this country, who are born-and-bred Americans, who have fought for the Flag in every war, who have withstood oppression and who have refused to follow the beckoning hand of Communism, who have retained their sunny dispositions and their sweetness of temper in spite of the injustice of some of the white people, these will go on, winning new laurels and new successes.

In many ways the black race is one of the most valuable races inhabiting the earth. It has opportunity to rise to new heights in the United States, and, in spite of obstacles it is winning through. Most white people are its friends, as the Negro leaders realize. Negro-hating is for the most part confined to the lower strata of white society.

Negroes Who Sought To Found Moslem Colony Digging Ditches Instead

Montgomery Ala Advertiser

ISTANBUL, TURKEY, Nov. 17.—(AP)—American negroes who came to Turkey two years ago to found a prosperous Moslem negro colony are digging the sewers of Istanbul to gain their daily bread.

11-18-31

Such is the end of the dream of Mehmed Ali Bey, a gray-haired negro of Detroit, to lead the negroes of America into a promised land of free farms and no race prejudice. He embraced the Moslem religion and brought his family of 10 children and grandchildren to Turkey. They came as pioneers to pave the way for the migration of hundreds of negroes who claimed had turned Moslem.

Mehmed Ali presented a petition to President Mustapha Kemal Pasha a year and a half ago for permission to establish his colony on the Bosphorus. The Ghazi referred the plea to Angora authorities and no action was taken.

Mehmed Bey found no color prejudice, and neither did he find any free farms in a Turkey suffering from hard times. Nor could he and his family find good jobs because of their ignorance of the language.

A benevolent Moslem Turk gave them an old house on the Golden Horn rent free, but for food they had to sell their clothes and possessions, chief of which was a huge Webster dictionary.

Now the sons of Mehmed Ali have found work as sewer diggers, the daughters as cooks, while the old man goes fishing on the same sea that soothes another involuntary exile, Leon Trotsky.

Negro Colony Is Located In Berlin

Pittsburgh Courier 12-5-31

BERLIN, Germany, Nov. 12—It is not generally known that the Berlin of harbors a number of Negro residents within its gates. The little colony of dark-skinned men and women consists mainly of natives of former German territory who have long been German subjects. Of these some 20 hail from Kamerun, seven from Togo, two or three from East Africa, while a few are from Abyssinia, the Congo and Liberia. They live happily enough in Berlin, speak German fluently and have all found work of some kind. One Togo native has a small but thriving sweet shop in the east of the city, another—the senior of the Negro colony—has been for 30 years a master tailor.—Christian Science Monitor, Boston, Mass.

DITCH DIGGING ENDS HOPES OF MOSLEM NEGRO COLONY

Macon Telegraph

Dream of Mehmed Ali Bey Dissolves Into Reality of Menial Jobs in Turkey

11-19-31

By PRISCILLA RING
(A. P. Staff Correspondent)

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Macon, Ga.

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